

# City Planning Department



## Memo

To: Cranston City Plan Commission  
From: Doug McLean, AICP, Principal Planner  
Date: October 1, 2021  
Re: Dimensional Variance Application for 481 Atwood Avenue - Signage

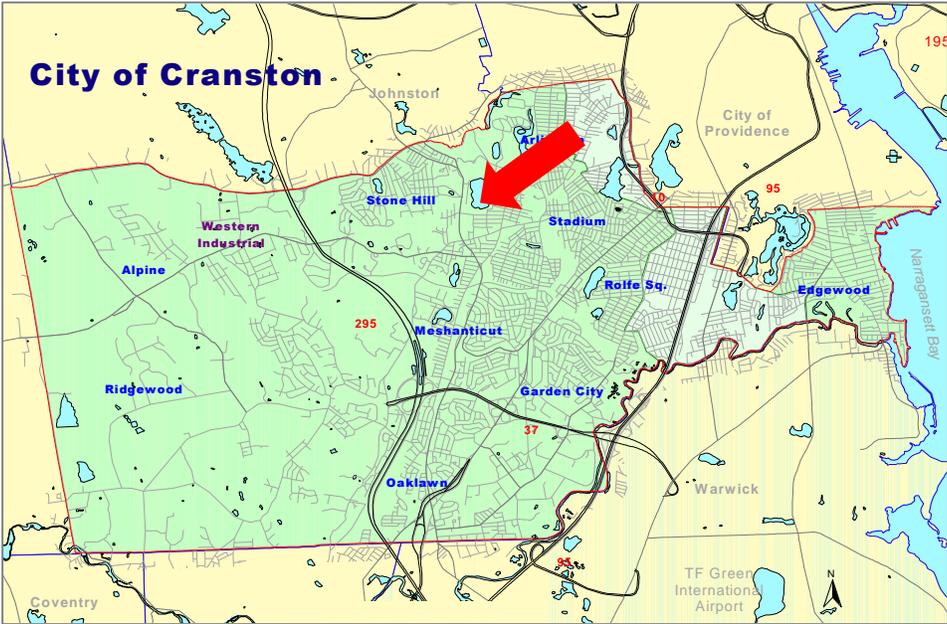
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**Owner:** Carter Holdings, LLC  
**Applicant:** PALUMBO LAW  
**Location:** 481 Atwood Ave, AP 12, Lot 3117  
**Zone:** M-1 (Restricted industry)  
**FLU:** Highway Commercial/Services

### DIMENSIONAL VARIANCE REQUEST:

1. To allow a new monument sign that exceeds multiple dimensional standards within the zoning code for an M-1 zone. The monument sign will also include an animated LED component which is not allowed per the zoning code. [17.72 – Signs]

### LOCATION MAP



**NEIGHBORHOOD AERIAL**  
(subject parcels marked in orange, 400 foot radius marked in black)



# AERIAL CLOSE UP



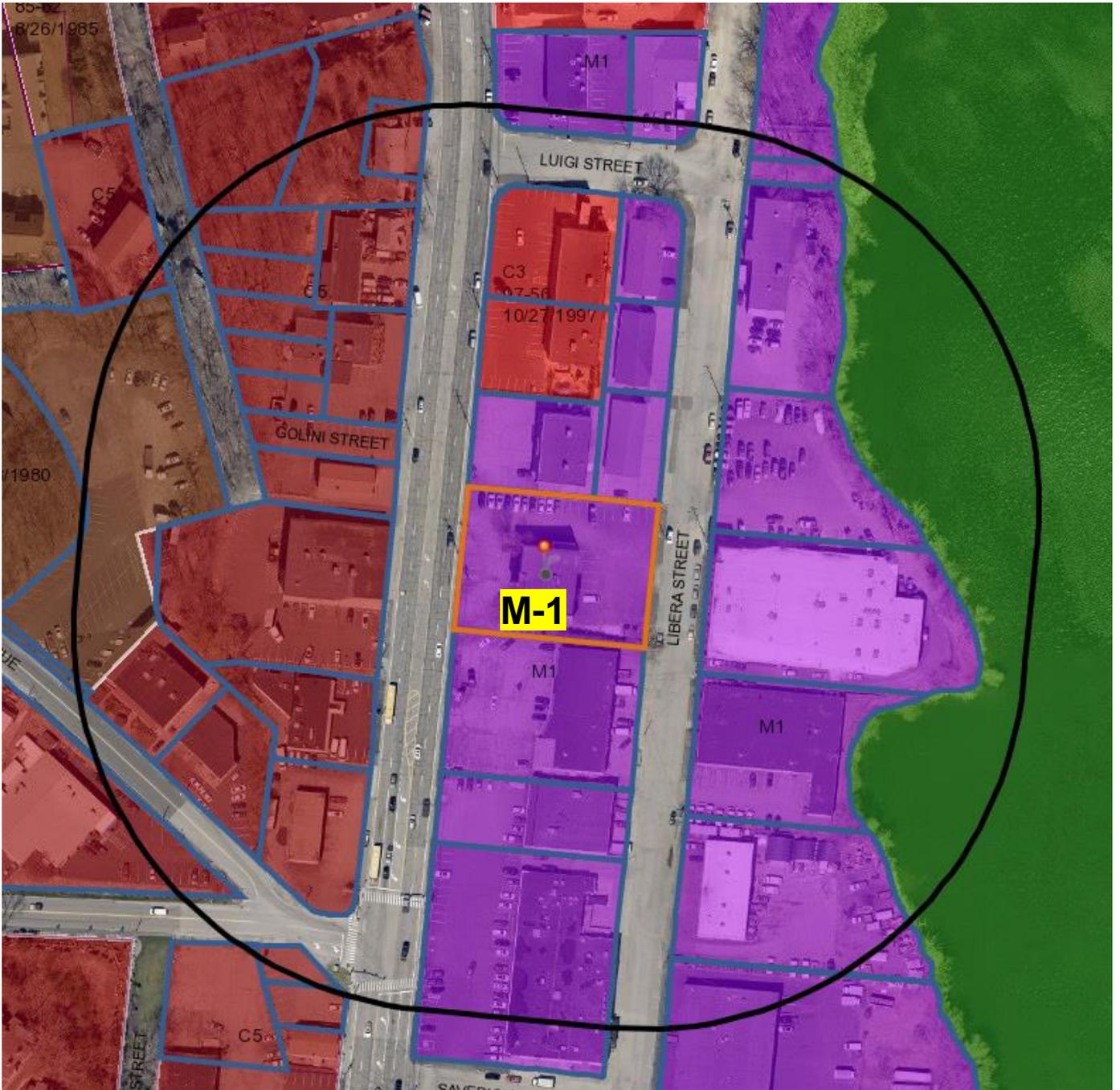
**3-D VIEW (facing east)**



**STREET VIEW (from Atwood Ave)**

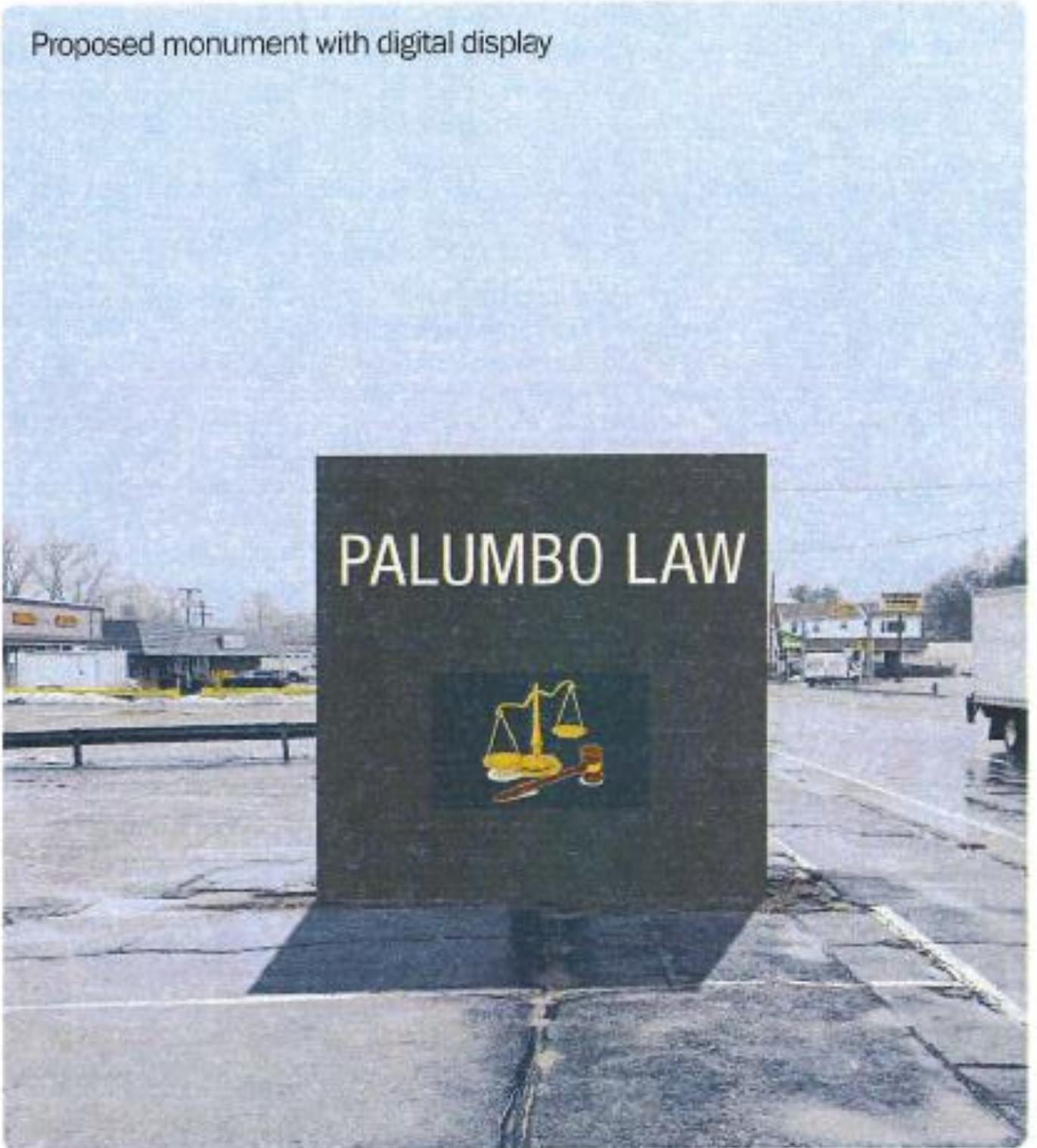


# ZONING MAP

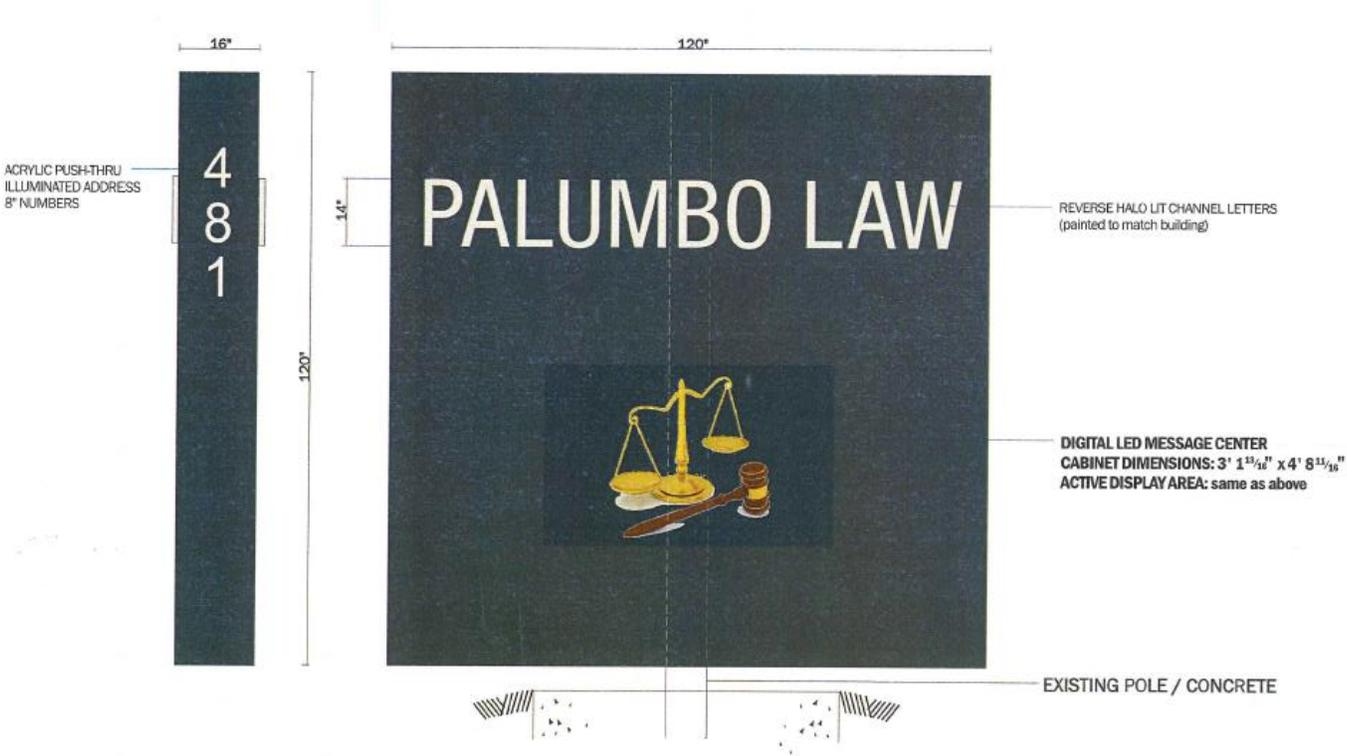


# PROPOSED MONUMENT SIGN REQUIRING VARIANCE

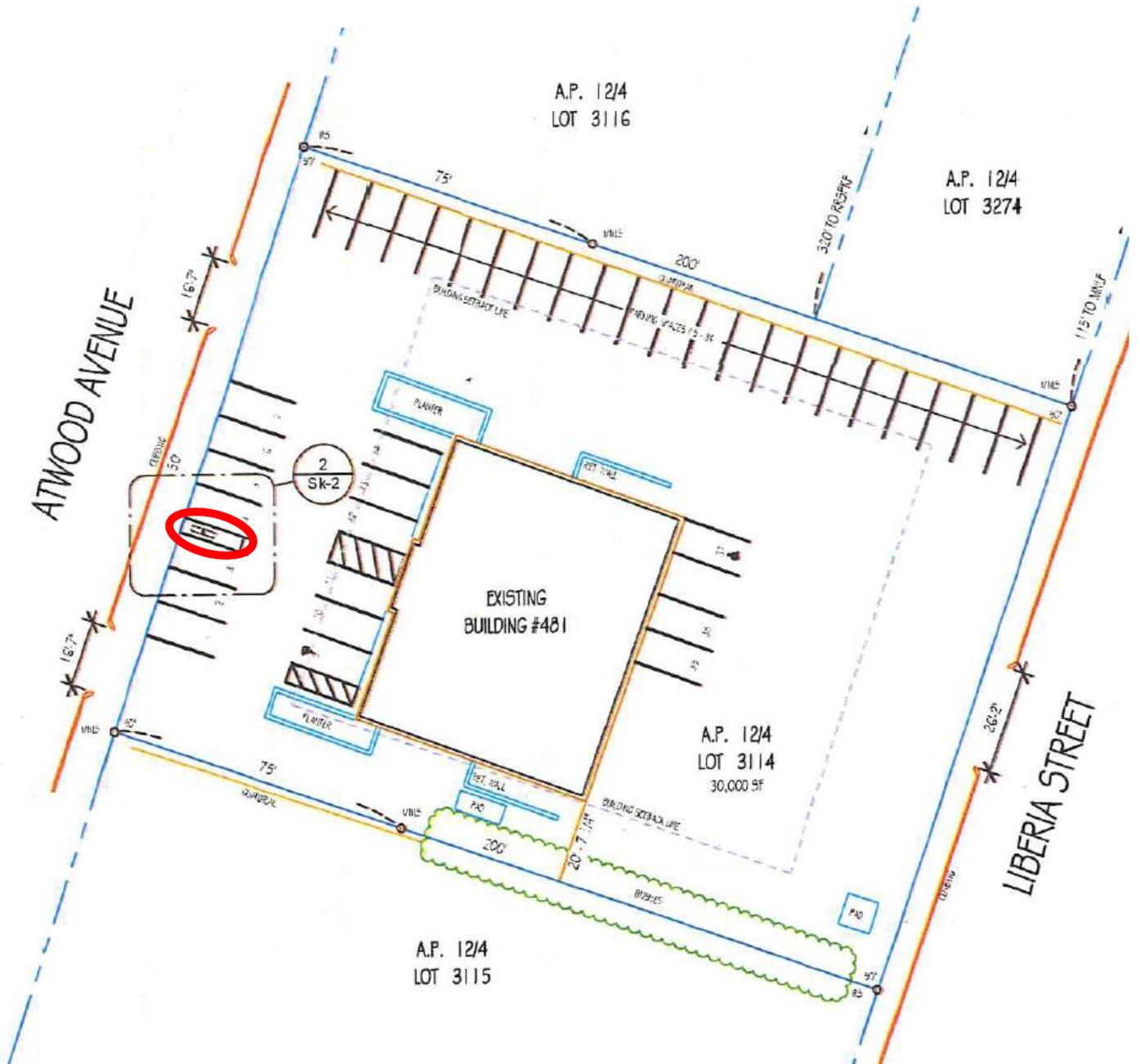
Proposed monument with digital display



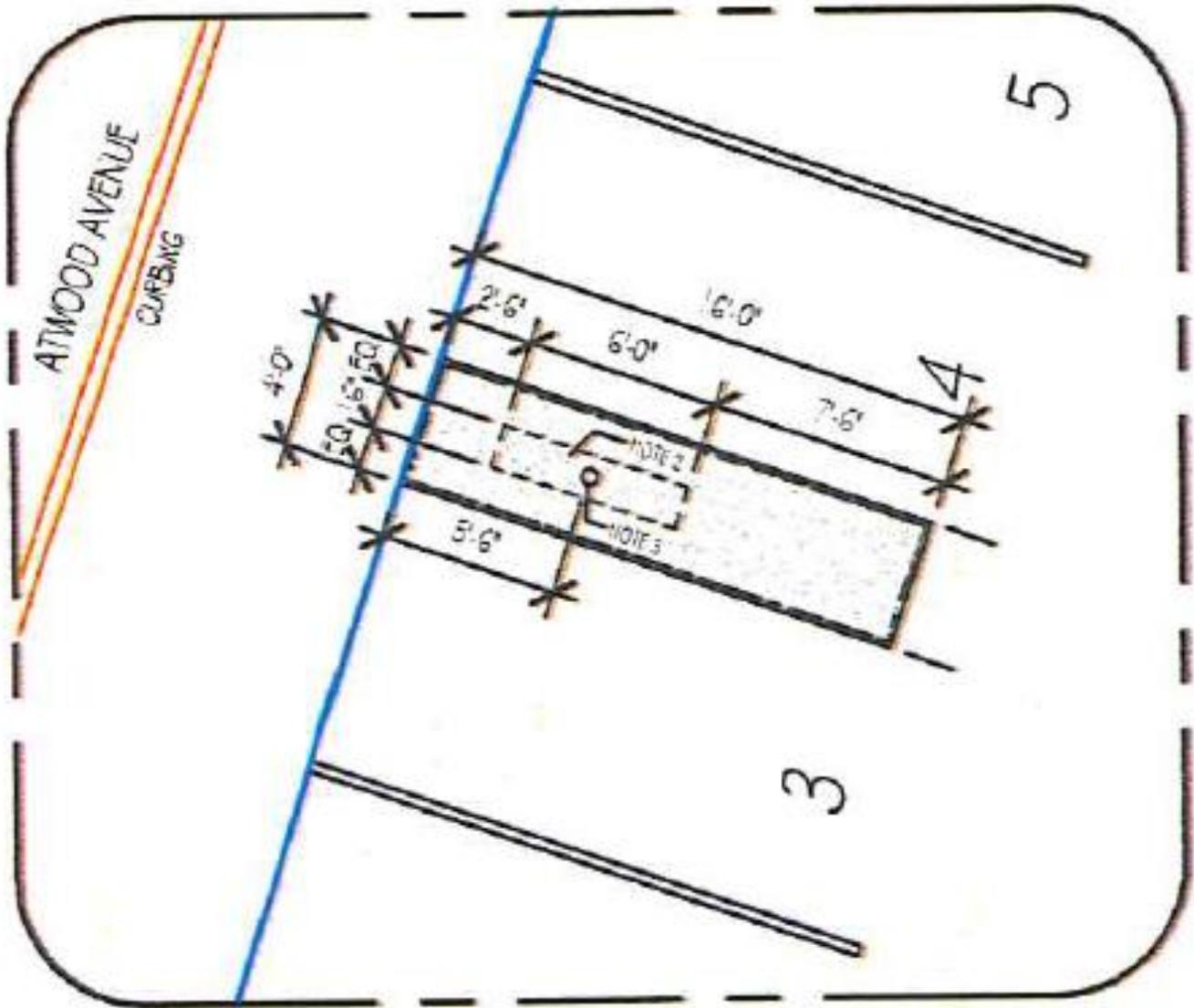
# PROPOSED MONUMENT SIGN DIMENSIONS



# SITE PLAN (proposed sign circled in red)



# SITE PLAN CLOSE-UP



**EXISTING CONDITIONS/OTHER SIGNS ON PROPERTY**



## FINDINGS OF FACT:

- The applicant proposes to install a new monument sign that triggers relief from multiple dimensional requirements within Section 17.72 (Signs) of the zoning code.
- Although the applicant did not itemize all of these specific dimensional relief requests in their application form, based on staff review of the materials and existing conditions the following elements appear to require a variance:
  - Monument sign is 10 ft X 10 ft for a sign face of 100 sqft per side and a total sign area (both sides of sign) equating to 200 sqft. The maximum sign area in a M-1 zone is 50 sqft.
  - Monument sign is 10 ft tall. The maximum sign height in a M-1 zone is 4 feet.
  - Monument sign is 0 ft from property line. The minimum sign setback in a M-1 is 2 feet from property line.
  - Monument sign adds 200 sqft of signage to the site overall signage allowance. Based on staff review, it appears this individual sign request will put the property's total signage above the maximum limit for that total signage allowance on the site which is set at 300sqft. It is not clear how much above the 300 sqft total signage this property will be, however it is clear to staff that the total signage on the property will exceed 300 sqft when accounting for the wall signs and freestanding signs existing on the site (as shown on page 11 of this memo).
  - Monument sign will include a LED/animated display area that is approximately 3 ft x 4.75 ft in size on both sides of the sign. This totals approximately 30 sqft of LED/animated display area. Such type of signs are not allowed per the Cranston zoning code.
- The site has 2 curb cuts along Atwood Avenue to provide primary access to the property. The proposed monument sign will be located between the 2 curb cuts and will be approximately 35 feet from each. Based on the sign's massing, height, and zero (0) setback from the property line/sidewalk, as well as the proximity to the curb cuts, staff has concerns that the proposed sign may present a safety concern with regard to blocking sightlines for vehicle safety. **The City's Traffic Engineer reviewed the proposal and provided comment that the application did present safety concerns regarding vehicle sightlines.**
- Staff provided pre-application comments/questions to the applicant regarding concerns of the sign's size as well as the inclusion of an LED/animated component and suggested that the applicant may wish to address reasonable limitations of the animated component of the sign, such as:
  - Will animated sign include moving images or static images?
  - If static images, how frequently will images change?
  - Will the application place an illumination (brightness) limitations on the animated component of sign?
  - Will the brightness of the animated component of sign be adjusted during day vs. night?

Staff would note that the applicant did not include any descriptions or limitations on the item noted above regarding the animated component of sign.

- Based on the fact that this application includes an LED/ animated sign that does not set any limitations on type, frequency, or brightness of animations, staff finds that the proposal is not consistent with the Cranston Comprehensive Plan which established a desire to minimize negative visual impacts.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Due to the findings that the proposed application is generally inconsistent with the Cranston Comprehensive Plan, and that there are potential safety concerns with the sign's massing and location as it relates to vehicle sightlines, staff recommends the Plan Commission forward a **negative recommendation** on the application to the Zoning Board of Review.